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SUBJECT: DEMOCRACY SMALL GRANT PROPOSAL FOR GENDER BUDGETING STUDY IN KUWAIT

REF: STATE 91641

[¶11.](#) Embassy Kuwait requests an NEA Democracy Small Grant of \$25,000 to sponsor a gender-budgeting study to be carried out by the Kuwait Economic Society.

THE PROBLEM

[¶12.](#) Women, who do not have the right to vote, have little opportunity to influence policy in Kuwait, and women's rights activists point to overwhelming apathy as one of the greatest obstacles in their path to equality. Many of those who oppose women's rights hide behind the high standard of living enjoyed by all Kuwaiti citizens; these critics feel Kuwaiti women have no need to gain political equality to improve their situations because they experience no suffering and want for nothing.

[¶13.](#) Recognizing that a direct push for political rights does not appeal to many Kuwaiti women, women's rights activists now hope to use the issue of economic inequalities to gather support for reforms from conservative women. They are attempting to draw attention to economic inequalities to demonstrate to Kuwaiti women that their lack of political rights has far reaching consequences. By highlighting the ways in which the disenfranchisement translates into economic disadvantages for women and their children, women's rights activists hope to raise awareness and interest among more conservative women. Activists hope that presenting women with evidence that they are not receiving their fair share of economic benefits from the government will energize women to agitate for a voice in that government.

THE PROJECT

[¶14.](#) To help develop this new strategy for gaining support for political rights for women, Embassy Kuwait requests an NEA Democracy Small Grant (DSG) to sponsor a gender-budgeting study to be carried out by the Kuwait Economic Society. The DSG would fund a gender-sensitive analysis of the most recent available Kuwaiti budget, and the publication of that analysis. Embassy Kuwait believes the study will bolster claims by women's rights activists that lack of a voice in politics translates into concrete economic disadvantages for women and their children.

[¶15.](#) Gender-budgeting (GB) is a method of examining the government budget to determine its different impacts on men and women, and can be used to gender-analyze macroeconomic policy. GB initiatives reflect the growing move toward more open, participatory, and responsive systems of governance; since 1985, 20 countries have used GB techniques as part of their budget development process. GB initiatives bring the issue of gender equity in resource allocation to the attention of legislators, and analyze the extent to which budgets reflect the different roles that men and women play in the economy. Both women and men contribute to the economy, but are neither equally distributed across sectors nor equally remunerated for their labor. For example, women's unpaid domestic labor and reproductive work maintains the social framework and the future labor force, but is rarely formally recognized as a contribution to the economy. Aiming to influence budget decision-making, GB initiatives propose resource re-allocations to close gender gaps and to address the unmet needs of women and girls. Women's rights activists will share the results of the GB study with parliamentarians and use the findings to advocate for gender equality in budget allocations.

THE PLAYERS

[¶16.](#) The Kuwait Economic Society (KES) was established in 1970 to encourage scientific research to contribute to economic development in Kuwait. The KES cooperates with foreign and international organizations to further its objectives of economic liberalization. The KES is a force for much-needed

reform of the Kuwaiti economy and is one of the Embassy's best economic contact organizations. The KES hosts monthly seminars to discuss economic and social developments in Kuwait, as well as bi-annual conferences addressing key economic issues such as the WTO, privatization, and the oil industry. Most importantly from the perspective of this project, the KES regularly participates in the legislative process pertaining to the economy; the National Assembly consults with the KES on draft laws dealing with economic issues.

THE PLAN

17. The KES estimates it will take 6 months to complete the study. They envision using a nine-person team to perform the budget analysis: 1 team leader/coordinate, 1 outside consultant (recommended by the World Bank), 6 local analysts to gather information and statistics, and 1 administrative assistant to provide office support. The information gathering and administrative work will all be done by local staff; the outside consultant will spend approximately 1 month in country gathering and analyzing the data. The consultant will return once the report is completed to present the results.

18. Post requests a grant of \$25,000 to cover costs associated with this project. The Kuwait Economic Society will provide and pay for the local staff necessary for information gathering and support. The Democracy Small Grant will cover the costs of the outside consultant brought in to perform the budget analysis. The cost breakdown is as follows:

Initial assessment
Consultant Fee: \$12,600 (\$450/day for 28 days)
Round-trip airline ticket to Kuwait: \$1500
Lodging and M&IE: \$6944 (\$248/day for 28 days)

Follow-up visit to present results
Consultant Fee: \$2250 (\$450/day for 5 days)
Round-trip airline ticket to Kuwait: \$1500
Lodging and M&IE: \$1240 (\$248/day for 5 days)

Total estimated cost for the consultant is \$26,034. The Kuwait Economic Society has committed to make up the difference between the Democracy Small Grant and the cost of the project.

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